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J.S.Lederberg, A.S. V-12 USN1

Lab., USNavHosp,

St. Albans, L.I., N.Y.

Sunday, 13 February 1944.

Dear Jack:

THE SABBATH DAY FINALLY GIVES ME AN OPPORTUNITY TO WRITE TO YOU. N.B. DO NOT FORGET TO ADDRESS REPLY TO COLUMBIA AS PREVIOUSLY.

LIFE AT THE HOSPITAL IS ABOUT THE ONLY THING THAT I CAN WRITE TO YOU ABOUT THAT CAN BE OF ANY INTEREST. AND IT HAS BEEN LARGELY A MATTER OF DISSIPATION. THAT IN A SENSE IS MADE INEVITABLE BY THE CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH WE WERE SENT HERE :TO WASTE TIME UNTIL WE WERE READY TO GO TO MEDICAL SCHOOL. IT WAS CLEAR TO ME FROM THE BEGINNING THAT MY FORTUNE WAS OF THE BEST UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES; IF I GRIPED A LITTLE IT WAS ONLY BECAUSE I HAD NOT YET BECOME ACCUSTOMED TO THE WAYS OF THE HOSPITAL? WHICH WHILE NOT COMPARABLE TO THE REAL NAVY? THE FLEET AT SEA, WAS NEVERTHELESS A CONSIDERABLE CHANGE FROM THE ACADEMIC WAYS OF ALMA MATER. NOW I AM ABOUT TO RETURN TO THOSE HALLOWED HALIS FOR A FOUR MONTHS TOUR OF DUTY(FOR IT IS IN THIS SENSE THAT I RETURN) AND I LEAVE ST ALBANS A LITTLE RELUCTANTLY.

ST. ALBANS IS A NOT ATYPICAL, FAIRLY WELL-TO-DO? QUEENSIAN TOWN A SHORT BUS RIDE FROM THE LAST I N D SUBWAY STATION IN JAMAICA. THERE USED TO BE A FAIRLY FASHIONABLE GOLF COURSE HERE: ON THAT SITE THE NAVY HAD BUILT THIS SPRAWLING INSTITUTION WITH OVER A MILE OF CORRIDOR AND CALLED IT A HOSPITAL. AND THAT IT IS. IT HAS BEEN IN OPERATION SOMEWHAT OVER A YEAR NOW, BUT ALREADY THE TEMPORARY CONSTRUCTION SHOWS SIGNS OF AGE AND THE WHOLE BUSINESS WILL PROBABLY COLLAPSE BEFORE ANOTHER ~~10~~ 10 YEARS HAS ELAPSED. DIRECTLY ~~IMMEDIATELY~~ I ARRIVED I WAS ASSIGNED TO THE LABORATORY: BUT FORTUNATELY A LITTLE ACCOUNT WAS TAKEN OF MY COLLEGE EXPERIENCE AND I FOUND MYSELF THE EQUIVALENT OF A SUPPLY SERGEANT. (I WONDER IF YOU'VE READ THIS WEEK'S YANK?) PEOPLE BEGAN TO CALL ME A STOREKEEPER'S MATE 6TH CLASS. THIS IS NOT A TIRESOME DETAIL? BUT IT HAS KEPT ME BUSY AND MOVING. BUT UNDER THE DISSIPATING INFLUENCES MY ACADEMIC PRETENSIONS HAVE FALLEN LIKE THE LEAVES FROM AN AUTUMN TREE AND HAVING WRIT MOVES ON..... SIC.

I HAVE FOUND MANY ~~MY~~ FRIENDS HERE, AND NOW THAT I AM ALMOST AT THE POINT WHERE I CAN LOOK BACK AT THESE FOUR MONTHS (MOST OF THEM SPENT UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT THERE GOING TO BE A GREAT MANY MORE) I APPRECIATE THAT I WOULDN'T HAVE MISSED THIS EXPERIENCE FOR THE WORLD. THE ~~RECOLLECTION~~ RECOLLECTION OF THE OCCASIONAL PETTY ANNOYANCES HERE (WHICH GROW FEWER DAILY) IS NOT QUITE ERASED BUT IS ALREADY BECOMING OBLITERATED. AFTER THIS ~~THE~~ THE CADET LIFE AT COLUMBIA MAY SEEM LIKE AMBROSIA OR THE DRECS OF HADES.

I HAVE PROBABLY OUTLINED TO YOU THE 'WORK' THAT IS DONE HERE: I WISH THAT YOU COULD DO AS MUCH. TO OUTLINE IN FURTHER DETAIL THE MANNER OF MY DISSIPATIONS WOULD BE INDISCREET AND UNGENTLEMANLY. ERGO J'AI FINI ET AU REVOIR....

JOSH

PS: ANY NEWS FROM AUSTRALIA??

This did reach him.